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REVIEWS

Primer Libro de Lectura, by Gertrude M. Walsh. D. C. Heath & Co., 1919. XII + 119 pp.

The author states in the preface that this book is intended for very early reading. She desires "to vitalize the language by relating it to the pupil's own experience and activities." Two methods are used to aid in acquiring a vocabulary: "First, the employment in each lesson of many words associated in idea, and second, the grouping in a formal word study of words according to their derivation." In order to accomplish the best results the author uses only the present tense in the first seven lessons and omits the dependent subjunctive throughout the book. She urges the importance of phrases and recommends the memorizing of all idioms, locutions, proverbs, and poems. The amount of reading material is purposely small in order that the book may be completed in a short time and interest sustained by changing reading matter.

There is a brief introduction on "How To Study Words," in which various principles of language growth, word building, prefixes, suffixes and word families are noted.

There are twenty lessons dealing with the family, the class-room, meals, a visit, the telephone, traveling, shopping and other every-day affairs. A slight thread of continuity is afforded by the use of the same characters. The lessons are written in extremely simple Spanish, too simple, of course, to be entirely natural. However, it is only through this simplicity that we avoid the well-known difficulties of Spanish grammar and idiom. In mastering the twenty lessons the student will acquire a working vocabulary for later use in more natural and, therefore, more difficult Spanish.

There are a few footnotes on various idiomatic expressions. These notes are perhaps too few and too brief; despite the advantage of brevity a little further explanation would be serviceable. Thus, on page 53, *¿Qué hora será?* is translated "I wonder what time it is." An explanation of the tense would not be out of place. In other cases something more than mere translation is desirable.

Each lesson is accompanied by conversation, exercises, directions, idioms, proverbs, and material for word study, all carefully presented to supply material for practice of the reading matter.

The material for conversation is divided into two parts, i. e., questions dealing with the reading matter of the lesson, and questions intended to relate the student's own experiences to the subject matter read. There are few questions of the second type, and teachers should add to them, for questions not seen in print by the student are the most effective. The conversational matter is followed by idioms and proverbs to be memorized.

The exercises are of two types. Some consist of general directions to reread or rewrite the text of the lesson with various changes, to make lists

of words of related meaning, to draw plans of rooms with furniture, etc. The general directions are written in Spanish and, unless practically the same as previous directions, are translated in footnotes. The teacher may have to explain the dependent subjunctive when it is used in these directions. The exercises are varied sufficiently to prevent monotony. The making of word lists is a commendable feature and should effectively increase the student's active vocabulary.

The second type of exercise consists of sentences written partly in Spanish and partly in English. The English portion, always illustrative of some useful construction or idiom, is to be put into Spanish. This is a valuable drill, but it might well be varied from lesson to lesson by occasionally substituting blanks to fill, or Spanish model sentences to imitate. At the end of the book there are twenty sets of English sentences to be translated.

Each lesson is concluded by a study in *familias de palabras*. Under Latin words (two in each lesson; there is one Greek word) are collected Spanish derivatives. In lessons subsequent to the first, two words (usually Spanish, not Latin) are suggested to encourage continuation of the study of derivation. In supplying this valuable material Miss Walsh might well have introduced some untechnical remarks on Spanish phonology. On page 76 she does state that Latin *ct* regularly becomes *ch* in Spanish. She might have explained, on page 8, prosthetic *e* before Latin initial *s*; on page 29, *h* instead of Latin initial *f*; on pages 44 and 63, the changes from accented short *o* and *e* in Latin to *ue* and *ie* in Spanish.

The book contains five illustrations of rooms or scenes described in the lessons. These pictures may be utilized for vocabulary practice. Such seems to be the purpose in question 23, page 11. However, there ought to be more pictures, perhaps one in each lesson. It is unfortunate that two pictures appear in lesson 3; the picture of the kitchen would be more appropriate in lesson 6.

A few trifling misprints have been noticed in the book.

The most distinctive feature of Miss Walsh's book is the attention to word study, on principles laid down in the preface. This feature, the simplicity of the book, its brevity, drill work, and careful grading should commend it for use in first-year high school classes, especially in the Junior High School.

Easy Spanish Reader, by Joel Hatheway and Eduardo Bergé-Soler. New York, The Macmillan Company, 1919. XI + 386 pp.

In the preface we find that this book is designed to furnish "a very large amount of easy reading," and that the material "should deal with the ordinary experiences which enter into the lives of the pupils by whom the book is to be used." The authors state that the book is intended to be as easy as possible without being wooden or unidiomatic; difficult or rare idioms are avoided; tenses are introduced one at a time and in order; each lesson illustrates some special topic in grammar; the dependent subjunctive is omitted altogether; pronouns of address are limited to the formal type.

The text is very long. Including questions and exercises, and excluding the vocabulary, it covers 302 pages, and of this amount by far the larger part is reading matter. The text narrates some everyday experiences of a group of high school boys and girls. These experiences are divided into four sections, dealing with spring, summer, autumn and winter. We find scenes in school, a visit to a farm, a trip to New York, life in summer camps, a Fourth of July parade, carpentry, masonry, autumn scenes in school and country, a snowball fight, tobogganing, and so on. The material does not exactly form a story, but it does describe scenes quite possible in the experience of young people. Much informational matter is introduced by various devices. Thus, the farm scenes lead to explanations of agricultural activities. The introduction of informative matter by such a device is somewhat artificial. To this objection it may be answered that vocabulary of real value is introduced by this means.

Apparently the text has been composed entirely by Messrs. Hatheway and Bergé-Soler. They have succeeded remarkably well in providing readable matter with a large and varied vocabulary, much dialogue, interesting episodes and repetition of common words and constructions. It would be too much to expect that selections such as these should sound altogether like natural Spanish. They have been collected to prepare the student so that he may later undertake the reading of natural Spanish. In some places the language might be improved; a certain stiffness and too close correspondence to English idiom are now and then observable. Thus, page 22, line 13, *¿En qué consisten?* is less natural than *¿Cuáles son?*; page 35, line 14, and elsewhere in the book, *las personas* might give place to *se*; page 44, line 22, *tenían que* would better be *debían* or *habían de*; page 66, lines 20 and 21, the preterit of both *pasar* and *arrojar* would be clearer to students (there are other sudden shifts from preterit to imperfect); page 90, line 8, *us.edes* is overdone; 198, line 8, the future *querrán* after *cuando*, to avoid the subjunctive, is very forced. In these and other cases the text could be polished to advantage. But when the difficulty of the task is considered, and especially the restriction imposed by avoidance of the subjunctive, etc., one can only congratulate the authors on the success that they have achieved.

It has been stated that each lesson illustrates a grammatical point. Thereby results a tendency to overdo this one particular point. It is most apparent in the lessons on the progressive tenses and on the passive. In the preface the authors recognize the danger of overworking one construction, but they believe the method to be fundamentally sound. Unquestionably it gives concentrated practice.

With few exceptions the narrative is logical. On page 153 the importance of the ivory industry is perhaps exaggerated; on page 262, line 7, either *abuelos* or *el Sr. Selwood* is probably unintentional, as the persons indicated seem to be the great-grandparents of the children.

The book embodies three principles that will arouse controversy, with something to be said on each side. The first is the entire avoidance of the dependent subjunctive. In a book of such length it might well be introduced before the end. The second is the limitation to the *usted* form of ad-

dress. It seems unnatural when children constantly address each other with the form *usted*, and when parents so address their children. The third matter is the complete suppression of notes. Obviously the authors have endeavored to make notes unnecessary by a splendidly complete vocabulary; perhaps they felt also that notes would add more pages to a book already very long. Furthermore, the grammatical point illustrated in each lesson implies explanation on the part of the teacher. But a few notes on difficult matters would help both teacher and student.

Each lesson is accompanied by a short set of questions on the Spanish text and by a short theme in English. In the preface the authors emphasize the value of the direct method and assume that the questions will be supplemented by teachers.

The vocabulary is very complete in phrases and idioms. No omissions of words have been noted except *tía* and *tío*. For a book of nearly 400 pages there are very few typographical errors. There are sixteen excellent drawings of incidents described in the text, which can easily be used in the oral work.

The unusual length of the "Easy Spanish Reader" may lead to unfavorable judgment on the part of some teachers. The authors believe that a great amount of easy reading is beneficial. Their position is absolutely sound. One learns to read by much reading. Still, this reader is too long to be covered in a reasonable time in any elementary Spanish course. Furthermore the absence of exciting incident may tend to make it monotonous. Several possibilities are apparent. The simplicity of the book makes rapid sight-reading practicable. A part of the reader only could be utilized. The reviewer recommends unhesitatingly the use of Messrs. Hatheway and Bergé-Soler's reader at an early stage in a high school course in the belief that it furnishes a wide vocabulary, a thorough drill in grammatical principles and a good preparation for reading Spanish literature and commercial documents. He does not believe, however, that it is necessary to read all the work. The material is provided, and the teacher can use all of it or just as much as may seem desirable under special circumstances.

A Spanish Reader, by John M. Pittaro. D. C. Heath and Company, 1919.
X + 298 pp.

The object of "A Spanish Reader" is stated in the preface: "to give the beginner an active vocabulary of a practical and literary nature; to provide him with as much information about Spain and Spanish America as a book of this scope will permit; and to afford him an opportunity to talk and to write about what he has read."

The text is preceded by ten pages of classified school-room expressions and by a list of grammatical terms in Spanish. There are sixty lessons, very brief at first, but increasing gradually in length to several pages. Apparently unsigned chapters have been composed by the author-editor.

The earlier selections deal with things common in school children's experiences, such as the school, the city, the family, the newspaper, transportation, geography, etc. They are followed by humorous anecdotes from

various sources, and by bits of information concerning things Spanish. The last chapters contain brief accounts, mostly by Spanish or Spanish American authors, of important matters or persons, such as the Panama Canal, the discovery of America, the conquest of Mexico and Peru, Cervantes, San Martín, Bolívar, etc. There are a few long anecdotes or short stories by Juan Valera, Fernán Caballero and others. In the preface it is stated that "slight changes have been made in the text where it seemed advisable." A few poems are included. Necessarily, important historical matters are summarily treated.

The early lessons are exceedingly simple. They are intended to develop vocabulary and an acquaintance with straightforward prose. In themselves they are hardly long enough to prepare students to read the more difficult selections. This deficiency is made up by exercise work. Clearly the author favors the inclusion of really idiomatic Spanish in a first reader, but he is careful to lead up to it by easy stages and by abundant drill.

Mr. Pittaro is to be congratulated for his selection of varied and interesting material. A few criticisms of details may be made: on page 108, line 5, *demuestran* is rather weak and at first sight obscure; on page 118, line 14, the mixture of the preterit and imperfect tenses is confusing; on page 133, line 1, *mucho* does not make sense, in the reviewer's opinion. Some of the stories seem abrupt, especially the account of Cervantes on page 158, the second paragraph of *El Canal de Panamá*, page 130, and the story by Trueba, page 179. The abruptness is probably due to abridgment. This is certainly the case with the Trueba story, of which more than half is omitted. The author ought to call attention to so considerable an abridgment.

The footnotes constitute a commendable feature. The author states in the preface that certain elementary idioms have been explained repeatedly. We find again and again notes on the reflexive for the passive, the time of day, prepositions, word order, personal pronouns, *al* followed by the infinitive, *estar* and *ser*, *a* before the direct object, the infinitive after prepositions, *por* followed by the infinitive, etc. This method requires a great number of notes, which must be exceedingly brief. The notes in this volume suffer at times from compression. Examples are: page 97, note 2, the grouping of three separate words in one note is confusing; page 101, note 3, the subjunctive is not explained and there is only one note for two similar but not identical constructions; page 187, note 2, *¡Si los tienen!* requires more than translation. There are some other infelicities: page 16, note 4, *está siempre limpio* is not a convincing example of the use of *estar* to express a "temporary" quality; page 138, note 1, *lanzáronse* does not begin a clause; in a few cases the English translations could be more literal. In the more advanced chapters, several difficult constructions, hard to explain in the vocabulary, are not annotated; thus we have *fuera*, page 114, line 5; *tan*, page 116, line 4; *Este dinero me lo había entregado*, page 148, lines 21-22; *Ruego a Vd. tenga*, page 148, line 23; *que*, page 155, line 20; *Que dirían de él*, page 158, line 15, etc. However, these instances are largely matters of opinion and the reviewer wishes again to call attention to the principle of repeating over and over in notes, idioms of fundamental importance.

Another notable feature of "A Spanish Reader" is the drill work, embracing *cuestionarios* and numerous exercises. The *cuestionarios* are of the usual type, a little difficult perhaps for oral, but good for written work. The exercises are impressive by their variety. There are blanks to be filled, sentences of mixed Spanish and English to be made entirely Spanish, model Spanish sentences to be imitated, adjectives to be used with nouns and *vice versa*, sentences to be changed from singular to plural, idioms to be put into original sentences, verb drills, directions for original composition, etc. A difference from most text-books is found in the varying of exercise types from lesson to lesson. There is real value in this variation. The use of the same form of drill in every lesson is monotonous. Here the author supplies abundant exercise material because he believes that "no teacher should be satisfied with mere translation."

After the reading material we find a list of idioms (without translations), and an appendix on verbs. The vocabulary is substantially complete and accurate, as far as examined. The meanings given for words and phrases are appropriate, and represent natural English. Typographically the book is very good; a few misprints toward the end will doubtless be corrected in a second edition. Numerous attractive illustrations are provided.

Mr. Pittaro's book will find a place in a high school course; it seems especially adapted to the Senior High School. It can also be recommended unreservedly to beginning classes in colleges.

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Elementos de Español. An elementary Spanish grammar for schools and colleges, by Julian Moreno-Lacalle, A. M., United States Naval Academy. Benj. H. Sanborn & Co., Chicago. LXIII, 476 pages.

The author defines "Elementos de Español" as an eclectic method, a composite, he says, of the phonetic, direct, grammar, Gouin and analytical-inductive, therefore, a "reform method" grammar. He reviews the book very exhaustively in his preface (pp. vii-ix), and notes its salient points in eleven numbered paragraphs (p. xiii), which cover everything to be desired or hoped for in a grammar. Unfortunately all are not justified by the facts. Some of these "salient points" may be discussed in detail.

First, the phonetic introduction is to be commended. The chart is good and well explained. The phonetic type, however, is not used again throughout the book, either in the lessons or in the vocabulary. No passages are given in phonetic transcription—even the "drills" in the introduction do not give the pronunciation of the words in phonetic symbols. Why learn them if they are not to be used?

Point 4 says: "It confines each lesson to only one grammar topic, thus eliminating confusion and enabling the pupil to concentrate his attention." Lesson I contains: present indicative, gerund and past participle of *tener*,